

# APPENDIX I

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE OREGON/MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL ROUTES

The following historical overview of the Oregon and Mormon Trails was written for the Wyoming Recreation Commission by Robert Rosenberg, a historian employed by Cultural Research and Management, Inc. It provides an excellent historical overview of the great migration along the Oregon and Mormon Trails to Oregon, California, and the Great Basin. It is used here with permission from Gary Stephenson, State Trails Coordinator with the Wyoming Recreation Commission.

"The Oregon Trail, designated a National Historic Trail by Congress in 1978, was the principal travel corridor for the great 19th century westward migration to the Pacific Coast. The trail completely traverses the state of Wyoming from east to west, and numerous trail-related sites, landmarks, and pristine trail segments still remain. The Oregon Trail was originally blazed by legions of fur trappers and traders who were following the well-worn trails of the Native American Indian. The fur trappers discovered South Pass, the principal mountain gateway for the coming migration, and proved the trail's applicability to wagon travel. Missionaries followed the fur trappers along trails west to live among the Indians, attempting to Christianize and 'civilize' them. Emigrants followed, at first a trickle, bound for Oregon to escape social upheaval, poverty, depressed farm prices, and to find a place to start anew. These early settlers helped tip the balance in favor of American acquisition of Oregon from England in 1846, maintaining the nation's steady growth westward to the Pacific Ocean. The Oregon Trail became the chief central route across the trans-Mississippi West, carrying the beginning of the Mormon migration to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 and the hordes of gold seekers to California in 1849. The migration hastened the demise of the culture of the Native American Indian through military suppression and the reservation system. In addition to emigrant travel, the Oregon Trail corridor became the route for the first transcontinental telegraph, the Pony Express, and the federal overland mail. It was along this corridor that gold was discovered at South Pass, and men learned that livestock could successfully winter over on the high plains grasses of Wyoming. The Oregon Trail, then, helped spawn two of Wyoming's most important industries; mining and ranching. This corridor, which included many cutoffs and variations and the associated north-south secondary transportation routes emanating from it such as the Bozeman and Bridger Trails, opened up the interior of Wyoming to eventual exploitation and settlement. It continued to serve as a main transportation artery even after the construction of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, carrying emigrants both east and west, cattle, sheep and horses from Oregon and California, and regional and local traffic into the early 20th century. The history of the Oregon Trail is a history of the settlement of the western United States and the fulfillment of the policy of Manifest Destiny as America expanded from shore to shore in the 19th century.

"The origins of the Oregon Trail can be traced to America's early interest in the Trans-Mississippi West as a result of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804 to 1806, which explored the Louisiana Purchase obtained by the United States from France in 1803. Although their route was far to the north (from the headwaters of the Missouri River overland to the Columbian

the American people to a vast western region of virtually untapped and unlimited natural resources. It also established a claim for the United States that would prove valuable in later negotiations concerning the Oregon country, the early goal of the westward migration.

"Even before the return of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, large British fur companies had been attracted to the Northern Rockies in Canada and the Pacific Northwest. The Hudson's Bay Company and the Montreal-based North West Company were well established in the region before American fur trappers began exploiting the Louisiana Purchase. In 1810, John Jacob Aster, founder of the American Fur Company, conducted the first well organized assault upon the British dominance of the western fur trade. He dispatched two expeditions to the mouth of the Columbia River to establish the headquarters of an envisioned chain of trading posts stretching from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. The first expedition traveled by sea and founded the headquarters settlement of Astoria in April 1811. The second party was led overland by Wilson Price Hunt, who attempted to find a more southerly alternative to the route taken by Lewis and Clark, due to fear of the Blackfeet Indians. The party entered present-day Wyoming from the northeast corner near the great bend of the Belle Fourche River, continued southwesterly across the Bighorn Mountains and followed the Bighorn River southward. In the vicinity of Dubois, they found a well-worn Indian trail leading into the Wind River Mountains, crossing at Union Pass. They entered the upper Green River Valley in mid-September and left Wyoming via the Hoback River and Teton Pass.

"More important to American westward expansion was the expedition led by Robert Stuart in 1812. Traveling east from Astoria, Stuart entered the present confines of Wyoming via Teton Pass and descended the Green River after taking a circuitous route along the Bear River, Greys River, and back down the Snake, attempting to avoid a party of Crow Indians. A friendly Shoshoni had told Stuart about a better crossing of the Wind River Range to the south. Still attempting to elude a large Crow war party, he detoured south and crossed the Divide in the South Pass area. Stuart is generally credited with the discovery of that great gate of the westward migration. He continued east along the North Platte River, camping near Casper, Wyoming, and Scottsbluff, Nebraska. He not only discovered South Pass but traveled from west to east along a large portion of what would become the Oregon Trail.

"After its initial discovery, South Pass remained in obscurity until 1824 when it was 'rediscovered' by an Ashley party led by Jedediah Smith, who was looking for a westward crossing of the Wind River Range in winter. Thereafter, the pass was commonly used by mountain men and became well known to the general public. In 1830, Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette led a caravan of wagons loaded with trade goods along the eastern portion of the Oregon Trail as far as South Pass. They did not cross the pass, but proved that the route was feasible for wagon migration to that point. In 1832, Captain Benjamin L.E. Bonneville led the first wagons across South Pass into the Green River Basin, proving the practicality of the pass for wagon travel. Thus, the fur trappers and traders had not only discovered the essential Oregon Trail corridor, but proved its ability to accommodate wagon traffic.

River) and was unsuitable as a major emigration route, reports and journals published by the expedition drew the attention of

"By 1840, the fur trappers and traders had unwittingly hastened their own demise by developing an east-west corridor across the Trans-Mississippi West suitable for wagon travel. Popular interest had been aroused by the tales of returning Astorians, explorers, and mountain men of the vast empire that lay west of the Mississippi River. By an 1818 convention with England, the Oregon country became open for joint occupation by both English and American citizens. Spanish and Russian claims to the Oregon country were relinquished by treaties. American claims were tentative, as Astoria had been purchased by the North West Company during the War of 1812, and the American fur trade had lagged in the region until after 1819. In 1821, the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company merged under the charter and name of the latter to form a colossal fur empire. The resulting English monopoly in Canada and the Oregon country attempted to drive out American fur interests using 'cutthroat competition.' However, the proximity of the American settlements allowed hundreds of American citizens to enter the Oregon country, either overland by the Oregon Trail or by sea in the years following the convention, so that they eventually greatly outnumbered the British. Finally, in 1846, Oregon became a territory of the United States.

"The Oregon Trail allowed thousands of dissatisfied citizens to enter Oregon and helped tip the balance for its acquisition by the United States. As a result of the financial panic of 1837. depressed farm prices, the social impact of the industrial revolution, and the hope that life will be better elsewhere, thousands were willing to 'take the jump' at Independence, Missouri, and cross the rolling prairies to the Great Platte River Road.

"In 1836, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and their party were sent to the Oregon country by the American Board of Foreign Missions to establish a Christian mission among the Indians. Leaving the annual trappers' rendezvous (held that year near the confluence of the Green River and Horse Creek near present-day Pinedale), the Whitman party traveled by wagon on a laborious route to Fort Hall. The wagon was converted into a cart which was finally abandoned at Fort Boise. In 1840, the Newell party took three wagons from Fort Hall to the Willamette Valley, reaching the Whitman mission that fall. The following year, Newell proceeded down the Columbia River with his wagon and is credited with the first wagon trip to reach the Pacific.

"In 1841, the Bidwell-Bartleson Party left Westport Landing guided by Thomas Fitzpatrick bound for Oregon. This party is generally credited as 'the first emigrant party' to traverse the entire length of the Oregon Trail. However, they abandoned their wagons at Fort Hall. The Elijah White party followed in the 1842 season and likewise left its wagons at Fort Hall. In that same year, John C. Fremont traversed a large portion of the emigrant road and made the first accurate map and guidebook for travelers. In 1843, the first large overland migration was led by Marcus Whitman. The party consisted of 130 women and 610 children in addition to the men. Due to the numbers and composition of the emigrants, many historians use the year 1843 to mark the real beginning of the great westward migration.

"Aubrey Haines, a noted Oregon trail historian, has compiled the following statistics for emigrant numbers utilizing the Oregon trail prior to the California Gold Rush of 1849:

1841	32
1842	197
1843	875
1844	1,750
1845	3,000
1846	1,500
1847	4,500
1848	1,000

"The Mormon migration began in 1847, using the north side of the Platte River as far as Fort Laramie, then generally following the Oregon Trail to Fort Bridger. The Mormons had been brutally driven from Nauvoo, Illinois, in February 1846 and followed territorial roads and Indian trails across Iowa and established Winter Quarters near the site of Omaha. Over 3,700 Mormons gathered there and in communities in Iowa. In the spring of 1847, Brigham Young led a party of 148 westward to Fort Bridger. He then followed the recently discovered Hastings Cutoff to the Salt Lake Valley where he established an embryo Mormon colony in the wilderness. The migration continued throughout 1847 and 1848 with subsequent parties establishing mileposts, ferry crossings, camping spots and improving the road. In 1848, The Latter Day Saints' Emigrants Guide was issued by the Mormons and was one of the earliest trail guides to be used by travelers on the Oregon Trail. Thousands of Mormon converts from England as well as the United States continued to make the long overland journey to Salt Lake until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

"The Mormons began the handcart system in 1856 due to the lack of funds for a sufficient number of wagons. However, an early winter storm in October of that year resulted in the deaths of over 200 emigrants. The Willie company was caught by the storm along the Sweetwater River near South Pass. The party was already in a debilitated state from the long journey and made a camp on Rock Creek not far from the later site of the Lewiston mining camp. Before relief could arrive from the Mormon settlements, 67 emigrants had perished. Handcart travel was discontinued after 1860, and church sponsored teams and wagons were often sent east to haul the emigrants west. By the inception of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, an estimated 42,800 emigrants reached the Mormon settlements by means of overland travel, on foot, pulling handcarts, or by covered wagons. The Mormons were the first significant emigrant group to recognize the potential of and settle within a portion of the region lying between the Pacific Coast and the eastern settlements. Their seed colony gradually spread in all directions including east into southwestern Wyoming, and they maintained several ferry sites on the Green and Platte River crossings on the Oregon Trail.

"Prior to 1849, records show that 12,764 emigrants traveled the Oregon Trail. bound for Oregon or Utah. However. in 1849. interest shifted to California where significant gold deposits were discovered. The number of emigrants suddenly swelled to an estimated 22.550 to 30,000 in 1849 and 45.000 to 55.000 in 1850. These figures were obtained from wagon counts kept at Fort Kearney and Fort Laramie and multiplied by 3 to 4 occupants per wagon. along with estimates of packers (those who did not use wagons) taken from contemporary diaries. California-bound emigrants diverged southwesterly from the Oregon Trail, by using either the Hudspeth Cutoff from Soda Springs or proceeding southward down the Raft River southwest of Fort Hall. This huge influx of argonauts was initially composed chiefly of males bound for the gold fields. Later, the number of women and children increased as California's warm climate and agricultural virtues were more fully recognized after the gold fever had subsided. In 1850, cholera epidemics swept the emigrants. thus reducing the number of travelers the following season. By 1852 the numbers rose once again with 50.000 emigrants estimated on the Oregon Trail. By that year, the gold rush traffic had ebbed. and a significant portion of the emigration headed for Oregon. as it did in 1853.

"West of South Pass. a number of significant trail variations or cutoffs were blazed in order to shorten the journey and to avoid or limit waterless stretches in the Big Sandy Desert. Many of these cutoffs were opened in the 1850s, but the most significant, the Sublette or Greenwood Cutoff was blazed in

1844. Despite cogent arguments raised by Mary Hurlburt Scott that William Sublette discovered the famous cutoff in 1832 and the existence of a map drawn by David Burr in 1840 vaguely depicting the 'Soublette (sic) Route' in the vicinity of the cutoff the consensus among historians is that Caleb Greenwood led the first wagons (the Stephens- Townsend-Murphy Party) across the route in 1844. It is likely that fur trappers knew of such a route long before the westward migration, but it may be impossible to credit a single individual or establish a date for the blazing of such a trail due to the scant written evidence left by the mountain men. The Bridger Route (main route) of the Oregon Trail turned southwest from South Pass and followed the Big Sandy River to the Green River ferry crossings, and beyond to Fort Bridger located on Blacks Fork. From there the trail turned northwest, followed the Little Muddy, crossed the Bear River Divide to the Bear River and continued westward into what is now a crude 'V' with Fort Bridger at the base. The Sublette Cutoff, in effect, closed the top of the V and saved 2.5 to 3 days and 60 to 70 miles. However, the Sublette Cutoff crossed a waterless stretch estimated by guidebooks and journals as 35 to 53 miles (actually about 50 miles) before reaching the Green River. The Sublette Cutoff became very popular during the California Gold Rush which was characterized by impatient gold seekers. The Dempsey-Hockaday Trail, a cutoff on a cutoff, was pioneered by John M. Hockaday in 1856 and saved several miles where the Sublette Cutoff dipped southward in the vicinity of the Hams Fork drainage.

"Several new short cuts discovered in the early 1850s avoided the 50-mile desert crossing on the Sublette Cutoff and soon reduced the traffic on its eastern portion. The Kinney Cutoff, the Baker and Davis Road, and the Mormon Road (not to be confused with the route out of Fort Bridger), used in conjunction with the Slate Creek Trail west of the Green River, all shortened the waterless stretch. They were located south of the Sublette Cutoff and generally cut across the triangle of land formed by the convergence of the Big Sandy and the Green Rivers. These short variations then converged on the west side of the Green River and followed the Slate Creek drainage westward and once again joined the Sublette Cutoff.

"East of South Pass, two significant variations were used by emigrants, the Childs Cutoff and the Seminoe Cutoff. Andrew Child pioneered the cutoff which bore his name in 1850 and described it in his guidebook published in 1852. His route diverged in a northwesterly direction from the vicinity of Fort Laramie staying on the north side of the North Platte River and today's Guernsey Reservoir. It remained on the north side of the North Platte River and rejoined the main Oregon Trail in the vicinity of present day Casper. The Seminoe Cutoff was probably pioneered by a fur trapper known as Seminoe and received moderate usage by the military and the emigrants after 1850. It began southwest of the Ice Spring Slough and bore southwesterly, staying well south of the Sweetwater River. By taking this route, parties could avoid the numerous crossings of that river.

"The character of the westward migration on the Oregon Trail gradually changed through its decades of use. In 1849, a detachment of the U.S. Army, known as the Mounted Riflemen, established a number of military posts along the Oregon Trail for the protection and convenience of the emigrants. In Wyoming, Fort Laramie was converted into a military post. The site had long served as a fur trading center, strategically located at the intersection of the established route to the western trapping grounds along the North Platte River and the Trappers Trail south of Taos. Fort William was rebuilt in 1841 and named Fort John but became more popularly known as Fort Laramie. Fort John was purchased by the Army in 1849 and was gradually rebuilt with woodframe buildings. The original adobe fort stood at the south end of the parade

grounds and was finally demolished in 1860. According to the guidebooks, Fort Laramie was 665 miles west of St. Joseph, about one-third of the way to Sacramento. It represented the beginning of the mountains and the end of the more easily traveled plains. It was also the last outpost of civilization and provided a good 'turning back' place for the emigrant.

"The regiment of Mounted Riflemen under Colonel William Loring continued westward along the Oregon Trail but bypassed Fort Bridger by taking the Sublette Cutoff. However, Captain Howard Stansbury of the Corps of Topographical Engineers passed through the post in August en route to a survey of the Salt Lake Valley and recommended the location as being ideal for a military post. Fort Bridger had been constructed by Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez in 1842 and 1843 as a trading post which catered to the emigrant traffic. In 1853, the post was seized by the Mormons and occupied until the Mormon War of 1857, when the Mormons abandoned and burned the post. In 1858, the remains of the fort became a U.S. military installation which was in service until 1890. Therefore, wagon-bound emigrants had two major supply points along the Oregon Trail in present-day Wyoming. After 1849, in addition to the military installation at Fort Laramie, soldiers patrolled the trail offering additional protection for the emigrants.

"In 1857, Congress approved the construction of a number of wagon roads across the territories to aid emigrant travel and speed mail delivery to the West Coast. Frederick West Lander was appointed chief engineer of the Fort Kearney, South Pass, and Honey Lake Wagon Road. The existing Oregon Trail was utilized from Fort Kearney to Independence Rock and received limited improvements. The central division of this road crossed South Pass, the Green River Basin, and the Bear River Mountains to City of Rocks. Although Lander sent out a number of survey crews to inspect the various cutoffs already in use west of South Pass, he decided to construct a new road north of the existing variations which became known as the Lander Cutoff. It was opened for emigrant traffic for the 1859 season and was used by an estimated 13,000 travelers that year. Lander's crews also made minor improvements to some of the existing trail variations west of South Pass and dug some wells along the waterless stretch of the Sublette Cutoff. The Pacific Wagon Road improvements greatly aided the overland migration with new and shorter routes and the improvements of old ones, and in Wyoming, resulted in the creation of the Lander Cutoff.

"The Oregon Trail was also used as a major freight route to supply the growing Mormon settlements in Utah. As early as 1849, Ben Holladay had begun serious freighting on the Oregon Trail by taking 50 freight wagons to Salt Lake City, and he extended this effort to California in 1850. During the Mormon War of 1857, William B. Russell, Alexander Majors, and William B. Waddell conducted a large scale freighting operation to supply the U.S. military expedition under Col. Albert Sidney Johnston. The Mormons also developed their own freight lines after 1850 utilizing the Oregon Trail.

"In 1850, the federal government began mail service to the growing western settlements via the Oregon Trail by awarding a mail contract to Samuel Woodson for monthly mail service from Independence to Salt Lake City. W.M.F. Magraw succeeded Woodson in 1854 and continued mail and passenger service to Salt Lake and California. Both efforts met with mixed success due to harsh weather and Indian problems. In 1856, the Mormons succeeded Magraw and began to systematically develop relay stations using mule teams. However, the Mormon War of 1857 suspended overland mail service for about a year. Overland mail service to California continued on the more southerly Butterfield route. In 1858, John M. Hockaday was awarded the mail contract for the

central route over the Oregon Trail. He sold out to Russel Majors, and Waddell in 1859. These routes only extended to Salt Lake with California service continuing on the Butterfield line. Russell, Majors, and Waddell also established the famous but short-lived Pony Express which opened on April 3, 1860. Initiated chiefly as publicity for a central federal mail route to California, mail was to be carried by relay riders from St. Joseph to Sacramento in ten days via the Oregon and Mormon Trail in Wyoming. However, a transcontinental telegraph system was under construction at the same time, also utilizing the Oregon Trail corridor. Edward Creighton was in charge of construction from Omaha to Salt Lake City. The entire telegraph system was constructed in just over four months and forced the abandonment of the Pony Express on October 24, 1861.

"The impending Civil War led Congress to switch the Overland Mail route to California from the southern Butterfield line northward to the Oregon Trail. Ben Holladay received the one million dollar federal mail contract in 1862 by forcing the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company (Russell, Majors, and Waddell) to sellout to him for \$100,000 to settle outstanding debts. Holladay established stage stops all along the Oregon Trail in present-day Wyoming, using most of the existing Pony Express and stage relay stations. However, he soon moved his line southward to the Overland or Cherokee Trail in an attempt to avoid Indian harassment. From 1862 until the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the federal mail was carried via this route which stayed south of the Oregon Trail corridor until it rejoined the Mormon branch in the vicinity of Granger.

"Farther east, two major north-south trails emerged in the 1860s which branched off from the Oregon Trail to the Montana gold fields. The Bozeman Trail was laid out by John M. Bozeman in 1863. It diverged from the Oregon Trail and North Platte River near the future site of Fort Fetterman and proceeded in a northwesterly course through the Powder River Basin, passing by the present-day towns of Buffalo and Sheridan into Montana. This intrusion into the last major Plains Indians' stronghold allowed gold seekers to venture northward from the Oregon Trail. However, the risks were high as evidenced by Bozeman's problems with the Sioux on the initial trip. Therefore, in 1864, Jim Bridger laid out an alternative route which bypassed the Powder River country and utilized the Big Horn Basin to the west. Bridger's route left the Oregon Trail at Red Buttes and proceeded northwesterly through desolate sagebrush country to the Wind River and north to the Bighorn Basin and beyond.

"In 1866, the Bozeman Trail was strengthened by the military which built a system of forts that included Fort Kearny. Despite the military presence, emigrant travel on the Bozeman was extremely hazardous. In December 1866, 81 soldiers under the command of William J. Fetterman were killed by the Sioux near Fort Kearney, proving that the military could not adequately protect itself. This Indian victory and constant raids effectively closed the Bozeman Trail and led to the Fort Laramie treaty of 1868 which conceded the region to the Indians. The government abandoned its forts and forbade white travel through the area.

Fort Fetterman was established near the juncture of the Oregon and Bozeman Trails (just north of Douglas) in July 1867 and became the chief resupply point in the region during the Indian Wars of the 1870s. Hostilities ceased in the Powder River region of Wyoming by the signing of the Treaty of September 26, 1876, by which the Sioux Nation ceded the Black Hills and all rights to the lands to the west. This treaty opened up the area to white settlement, and the growing Wyoming cattle industry soon filled the vast rangelands in the region.

"Thus, by the 1860s, the Oregon Trail had become much more than an emigrant corridor. Auxiliary trails, like the Bozeman and the Bridger, diverged from the established route to open new regions. The transcontinental telegraph, the Overland Mail, and freight traffic to the Salt Lake settlements and beyond all utilized the route. Stage stations had been established at regular intervals along with military installations and the associated protection of the military. New trail variations and improvements had been achieved by the Pacific Wagon Road program as well as by the Montana Gold Rush excitement. Indeed, travel along the Oregon Trail had become very different from the early days of the pioneer wagon trains of the 1840s. The Oregon Trail had become the lifeline of a continent and bridged the sparsely populated territory between 'the States' and the far western settlements.

"Moderate use of the Oregon Trail continued throughout the 1850s and 1860s. There was a dramatic drop after the California Gold Rush had subsided, but the Colorado Gold Rush created a peak year in 1859 with 30,000 emigrants using the trail. Traffic subsided during the Civil War but gradually increased to 25,000 in 1865 and 1866.

"Trail historians generally use the year 1869 to mark the end of the traditional covered wagon migration as well as the pre-settlement period throughout the Oregon Trail corridor. With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in that year and the beginning of the settlement of the intervening territories, the character of western emigration was changed. However, other historians have noted that wagon travel did continue by those emigrants who could not afford rail or stage transportation, and those traveling shorter distances between or within the territories.

"The transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869. The immediate result was the demise of the Overland Mail via stagecoach. The far-sighted Ben Holladay had sold out to Wells Fargo Company in 1866 leaving it to suffer heavy losses when the railroad was completed earlier than assumed. Thereafter, the federal mail was carried by the railroads.

"In Wyoming, the Union Pacific chose a right-of-way which paralleled the route of the southerly Overland Trail rather than the better watered, but longer Oregon Trail. Stage and freight routes were developed along north-south lines emanating from mainline of the Union Pacific Railroad. The railroad encouraged settlement along its tracks, partially due to the granting of a 40-mile wide swath of land along the right-of-way, and because of the dependence of any industries on rail transportation to distant markets. Railroad towns such as Cheyenne, Laramie, Rawlins, Rock Springs, and Evanston grew up along the mainline far south of the Oregon Trail. They became the early commercial centers in Wyoming Territory, and north-south freight and stage lines generally grew from one of these points. Thus the Cheyenne-Deadwood stage route was built to the Black Hills gold and silver mines in 1874-75. Further west, the Rawlins-Fort Washakie Road connected the Wind River Indian Reservation with the Union Pacific Railroad to supply the Shoshoni and Arapaho tribes with goods. Several routes were developed to connect the Sweetwater Mining District at South Pass with the railroad, including the Point of Rocks-South Pass City Road and the Bryan-South Pass City Road. The railroad had replaced the Oregon Trail as the chief transportation corridor in Wyoming Territory and the West.

"Emigrant-Indian relations were inconsistent throughout the migration period on the Oregon Trail. Hostile acts and violent confrontations, although they did exist, have been overemphasized in trail history. During the early migration period in the 1840s, attacks were few, and there are many recorded instances of Indians helping the emigrants at treacherous river fords, giving directions, conducting peaceful

trading, and providing food. It does not appear that the native populations immediately recognized any threat from the small numbers of westward-bound emigrants, although they were in effect trespassing on tribal lands. Chief Washakie and his Shoshonis and eastern Snakes were particularly well known for their kindness and assistance to emigrant parties.

"The swelling of the emigration numbers during the California Gold Rush period may have marked the real beginning of ill feeling and open hostile acts. The large number of emigrants disturbed game herd movements upon which the Indian depended. Livestock overgrazed the range, and travelers cut all available wood within the trail corridor. As emigrant numbers increased, the odds of confrontations between the emigrant and Indian steadily increased. The paying of tributes by the travelers to cross tribal lands was a common practice that was highly resented by the emigrants. The cavalier attitude of some of the emigrants toward the Indian and incidents of begging and thievery on the Indians' part undoubtedly exacerbated the problem.

"The Laramie Treaty of 1851 represented a belated stop-gap measure to avoid violence. The terms of the treaty paid the participating tribes an annuity of \$50,000 a year in goods. In return, the tribes recognized the right of the United States to establish roads and posts in their territories. Rough tribal boundaries were also established to prevent fighting among the tribes.

"An incident which resulted in the Grattan Massacre graphically represents the pattern of reprisal which brought on the Indian wars of the 1860s and 1870s. It developed from a dispute over the killing of an emigrant's cow near Fort Laramie. When the impetuous Lieutenant Grattan was sent into a large Brule' Sioux village to arrest the culprit, he and 29 soldiers were killed along with Chief Conquering Bear. The military responded with the Harney Campaign in 1856 and its indiscriminate attack on a camp of Brule' Sioux on the Blue River near Ash Hollow, Nebraska. Knowing little of Plains Indian culture, most military commanders sought revenge on any available group of Indians. Once established, this pattern of reprisal was applied by both sides, resulting in the killing of innocent emigrants and Indians.

"The most dangerous portion of the Oregon Trail, contrary to popular myth, was not the plains but the region west of South Pass. Several serious attacks occurred along the Snake River in Idaho and the Applegate trail in northern California and southern Oregon. Estimates of casualties compiled by John Unruh for the period between 1840 and 1860 show that the. An emigrant was much more likely to die from disease, being run over by a wagon, from accidental shooting, from being trampled in stampedes, or drowning while fording rivers.

"By the 1860s, the Indian problem had worsened and open warfare erupted on the Plains. Ben Halladay moved his stageline south in order to avoid Indian attacks, but his new route was also raided. The most sustained period of attacks occurred in 1865, when the Sioux and Cheyenne retaliated for the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado. Red Cloud's War in the Powder River country and the hostilities along the Bozeman Trail have already been discussed. At the Battle of Platte River Bridge on July 26, 1865, Lieutenant Caspar Collins and a detachment of soldiers were surrounded and killed by Indians near the bridge crossing on the Platte River Bridge. In the same year, the transcontinental telegraph line was moved southward from the Oregon Trail to the Overland Trail due to constant Indian destruction of the line. However, it was kept open from Fort Bridger to the South Pass mining area. By 1876, military pressure and forced treaties had removed Indian populations, hostile or otherwise, from the vicinity of the Oregon Trail corridor in Wyoming.

"The great westward migration along the Oregon Trail clearly helped to precipitate the Indian Wars of the 1860s and 1870s. The United States government had made no serious preparations for dealing with the indigenous peoples of the West during the early stages of the migration. The mood of the country at the time was expressed by the policy of Manifest Destiny-the Indians had no right to these lands and stood in the way of the expansion of the American empire. The military arrived on the scene too late and too few in number to protect the emigrant or the aggrieved Indians. A young America was too impatient to take the time to peacefully solve these complex problems. Instead, the nation resorted to force and the reservation system to extinguish Indian claims. This is the negative impact of the great 19th century westward migration on the history of the United States and the indigenous populations in the environs of the Oregon Trail.

"Most of the emigrants who crossed what would become Wyoming Territory regarded the country as a series of obstacles to be overcome in order to reach more attractive destinations in the Salt Lake Valley, Oregon, and California. Wyoming's climate did not appear to be suited to farming pursuits. However, two events took place at the same time as the construction of the transcontinental railroad across the mountains and prairies of southern Wyoming which helped to change those views. The railroad provided the needed impetus for the development of the fledgling cattle industry in Wyoming, which had heretofore been limited to a small number of road ranches serving the emigrant traffic. The Texas Trail drives northward during and after the Civil War provided the cattle, Wyoming supplied the grazing land to fatten the beef, and the railroad provided the means of transportation to eastern markets. Wyoming was soon recognized as a great grassland empire ideally suited for pastoral pursuits. As a result, great trail drives were also organized from points west where substantial herds had already been established, and the stock was driven eastward over the Oregon Trail to Wyoming.

"The second phenomena was the discovery in 1867 of gold deposits near South Pass along the Oregon Trail. Hundreds of 49ers traveled eastward to try their hand in the newly discovered fields. When those emigrants traveling westward on the Oregon Trail began to recognize the economic potential of the intervening territories such as Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana, and some stopped short of the old goals on the West Coast.

"The earliest record of mining in the South Pass era dates from 1842, when gold was discovered by a Georgian traveling with the American Fur Company who was subsequently killed by Indians. In 1855 a party of experienced miners returning from the California gold fields found gold deposits along the Sweetwater River. Other small discoveries were made in 1860 and 1865. The close proximity of the Oregon Trail suggests that the region was subject to sporadic prospecting throughout the 1850s and 1860s by passing emigrants. However, no major strikes occurred nor were any claims staked until June 1867 when H.S. Reedall discovered the Carissa lode. A full-fledged gold rush soon followed despite attacks by Sioux and Cheyenne Indians that summer. South Pass City and Atlantic City sprang up among the mining claims, and by 1869, census figures showed 1517 people in the Sweetwater Mining District. However, by 1875, the Sweetwater District had become idle with most of the miners moving on to other strikes in a combination of factors including poor management and fraud. Also, recovering ores became more complex as greater depths were reached, therefore requiring more expensive milling processes. The mines were far from rail transportation with limited water and timber for milling and mine construction.

## Appendix I

"Contrary to popular opinion, the South Pass mines experienced numerous periods of renewed activity starting in 1879 with new discoveries at Lewiston. Interest in the district was sparked by Emile Granier's grandiose canal building schemes in the late 1880s to provide water for hydraulic mining. New finds were made at Lewiston in 1893 and 1894, and again from 1911 to 1914, and old mines were revitalized. Large scale placer operations netted considerable gold in the teens and 1920s, and gold dredging of Rock Creek was conducted from 1933 to 1941.

"The historical significance of the Sweetwater mines lay in the influx of hundreds of gold seekers to the region and their impact on the economic development and eventual settlement of this portion of Wyoming. As mentioned, transportation routes were built from the Union Pacific mainline to serve the mines and aided in opening up the region. The initial gold rush at South Pass hastened plans for Indian removal with the creation of the Wind River Indian Reservation which acted as a buffer between the mines and the more hostile Sioux Nation to the east. The proximity of the Oregon Trail corridor probably hastened the discovery of gold at South Pass with experienced miners passing to and from the California gold fields.

"Cattle ranching began in earnest in southeastern Wyoming Territory after the construction of the Union Pacific. The Texas Trail provided part of the livestock with over 100,000 head of cattle coming from Oregon to Wyoming and Colorado Territories by 1879. The Colorado mining communities, as well as hungry railroad construction gangs, provided the earliest markets. The new railroad towns of Cheyenne and Laramie also provided substantial local markets. As the surrounding range became stocked with substantial cattle herds, large numbers were shipped eastward on the railroad each year. With the opening of the Powder River country and the removal of the Indians after 1876, the cattle industry soon filled the void and occupied the vast grasslands north of the North Platte River and Oregon Trail. The industry also spread westward into the Sweetwater country along the Oregon Trail and in western Wyoming wherever the range was suitable for cattle.

"Sheep ranching followed about 10 years after cattle ranching was already established in Wyoming. Therefore, the sheep industry was limited to less favorable areas not already usurped by the large cattle outfits. Much of the foundation stock was driven eastward, first from California (1865 to 1884) and later from the Pacific Northwest (1885 to 1901) over the Lander Cutoff and Oregon Trail into Wyoming Territory. The Red Desert of southwestern Wyoming was found to be an ideal winter range for sheep.

"Open range management was used in both cattle and sheep ranching where the livestock depended on natural forage for survival both summer and winter. The dry climate allowed nutritious but scant prairie grasses to cure on the stem to provide winter forage. A certain percentage of cattle and sheep died each winter during the most severe blizzards, but this loss was offset by the low overhead of the ranching operation with little investment in buildings, fencing or supplemental feed. European capital was heavily invested in the Wyoming cattle industry during the era of the Cattle Barons in the late 1870s and early 1880s. The available range soon became overstocked, and the flooding of the market brought about a decline in beef prices. Drought conditions in the summer of 1886, followed by the devastating blizzard of that winter resulted in heavy livestock losses and a number of cattlemen were forced out of business. After that time, new management practices were established, whereby hay meadows were developed to provide winter forage. The range was gradually fenced off to provide greater control of the livestock.

"The Blizzard of 1886-1887 eliminated competition in what had become a crowded field, and effectively ended the open range system of the cattle industry forever. The cattle industry remained depressed for a long period of time after 1886, and the sheep industry filled the vacuum. It nearly dominated the cattle industry in the late 1890s and early 1900s with an all-time high of seven million sheep raised in 1910. Much like the cattlemen, the sheep interests tended to overstock the fragile range and suffered heavy losses in years of drought.

"For the Wyoming segment of the Oregon Trail corridor, the advent of ranching, both cattle and sheep, began the actual settlement of a region previously viewed as uninhabitable and unsuitable for the usual subsistence farming methods and developed east of the Mississippi River in an area of high annual rainfall. However, federal land and policy was not well suited to a semi-arid region where, according to John Wesley Powell, at least 2,560 acres or 40 acres per cow were needed for a successful cattle operation. Under the Homestead Act of 1862, a settler was limited to 160 acres of "unappropriated public lands," a parcel far short of what was needed in and near the Oregon Trail corridor in Wyoming. By 1880, two other land acts had been enacted by Congress in an attempt to tailor federal land policy to the western expanses. The Timber Culture Act of 1873 allowed an individual to claim 160 acres if he planted 40 acres in trees and kept them growing for eight years. However, early experiments showed that it was virtually impossible to grow substantial stands of trees in most portions of Wyoming Territory. The Desert Land Act of 1877 allowed a homesteader to buy up to 640 acres of "desert land" (land which required irrigation for the cultivation of crops) at 25 cents an acre as long as a portion of it was put under irrigation. Once again, this act proved untenable in most areas lacking year-round water sources for irrigation. Only 4,148 patents resulted from 15,898 filings under the Desert Land Act in Wyoming.

"By 1880, a Wyoming rancher could use all the existing land laws to obtain a maximum of 1,120 acres, and still fall far short of what he needed to conduct a successful cattle operation. As a result of the existing federal land policy, ranchers were literally forced to resort to fraudulent and illegal measures such as 'dummy' filings, controlling water sources, and fencing the public domain.

"Settlement in terms of the small farming homesteads envisioned by the federal government was hindered in Wyoming Territory for a number of reasons. First, the cattle interests were the first to take advantage of Wyoming's grasslands, and they required large amounts of land which they controlled by any means, fair or foul. Secondly, fertile lands in Oregon and California as well as the eastern fringes of the Great Plains were still available into the 1880s. Therefore, until these lands were saturated, the homesteader had little incentive to venture forth onto the Great Plains to brave the harsh semi-arid climate, the cattle rancher, or the Indians.

"However, with the fall of the large cattle interests after 1886, a crackdown by the General Land Office on the fencing of the public domain, as well as an increase in annual rainfall in the semi-arid regions in the 1880s, farming appeared more attractive, and the small homesteader began to file on public lands in Wyoming Territory. Most successful farming efforts occurred along the North Platte River along the eastern portion of the Oregon Trail corridor where rich bottomland existed and irrigation of crops was possible.

"The small farmer did not attempt to leave the well-watered areas until the dry land farming excitement late in the 19th century. The basic belief that 'rain follows the plow' improved farming equipment and new dry land farming techniques, along with the cycle of increased rainfall, allowed the farmer

to venture forth onto the unclaimed waterless prairie. The railroads and land companies encouraged homesteaders to take up these vacant lands. Railroad expansion in Wyoming had been quite slow after the building of the Union Pacific through the southern portion of the Territory in 1867-1868. Portions of the Oregon Trail and its variations were used by the Oregon Shortline in 1882. This branch was built from the Union Pacific mainline northwesterly from Granger and followed the old Hams Fork Cutoff through present-day Kemmerer and the main Oregon Trail from Fort Bridger along the Bear River to Soda Springs and beyond to connect the Union Pacific with Oregon rail lines.

"Although contemporary newspaper accounts long envisioned a rail line over South Pass to service the Sweetwater mines and upper Green River Valley, such a line was never built. Except for early 20th century rail lines built east of Casper, most of the Oregon Trail was never used as a right-of-way for railroads despite its long and proven history of travel.

"The small farmer had ventured onto the dry plains of eastern Wyoming. However, dry years in 1889 and 1890, and finally a severe drought in 1894 spelled the end of the wet cycle. Coupled with the nationwide Financial Panic of 1893, thousands of homesteaders were forced to abandon their homesteads and retreat from the dry plains.

"The height of the Dry Land farming boom occurred in Wyoming after 1900 and represented a renewed assault on the unclaimed public lands on the dry plains. This phenomena was encouraged by the State Board of Immigration and Agriculture as well as the railroads which were in the process of building lines into eastern and northcentral Wyoming. The 1909 Homestead Act increased the amount of land a settler could file upon to 320 acres and offered further encouragement to emigrate to Wyoming. Along the eastern

Oregon Trail corridor, the North Platte project resulted in the building of the Pathfinder Dam which was completed in 1910. It actually flooded a substantial segment of the Oregon Trail east of Independence Rock. Two canals were constructed on either side of the North Platte River eastward into the Nebraska Panhandle. Millions of acres of land fell under irrigation and were planted with sugar beets, seed potatoes, alfalfa, and wheat farming techniques for growing cash crops proved unsuccessful over an extended period. Those farmers who managed to combat periodic droughts throughout the teens and 1920s were finally defeated by the Dust Bowl and Great Depression of the 1930s. With the exception of the irrigated lands along the North Platte River southeast of Douglas, the majority of the land in and near the Oregon Trail corridor in Wyoming was returned to large scale livestock grazing ranches by the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 and Depression Era resettlement programs.

"Settlement of the Oregon Trail corridor was an uneven process, spread out over a number of decades. It remained a viable avenue of travel long after the completion of the transcontinental railroad for those who could not afford railroad or stage fares, for eastern and western trail drives, and for regional and local travel extending into the 20th century. Historian Mary Hurlburt Scott sites numerous examples of covered wagon traffic on the various cutoffs west of South Pass in the post-1880 era and as late as 1912. East of South Pass, large segments of the trail corridor were settled by ranchers and farmers by 1890. East of Casper, many trail segments were used by railroads or placed under cultivation and irrigation by 1920, and major communities such as Casper, Douglas, Glenrock, and Torrington had grown up over the trail."